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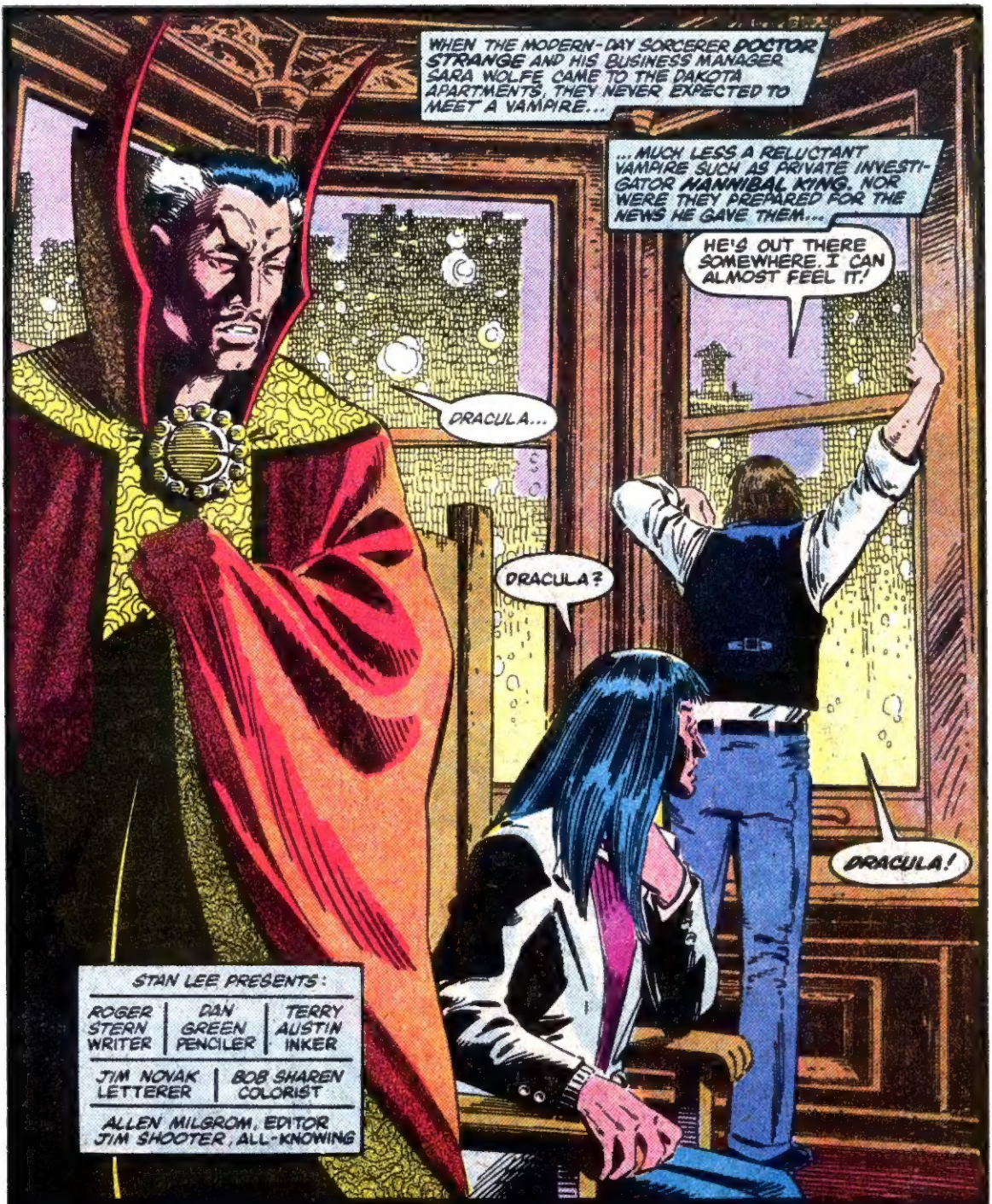
GREEN AND AUSTIN


WHEN THE MODERN-DAY SORCERER DOCTOR STRANGE AND HIS BUSINESS MANAGER SARA WOLFE CAME TO THE DAKOTA APARTMENTS, THEY NEVER EXPECTED TO MEET A VAMPIRE...
...MUCH LESS A RELUCTANT VAMPIRE SUCH AS PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR HANNIBAL KING. NOR WERE THEY PREPARED FOR THE NEWS HE GAVE THEM...
HE'S OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. I CAN ALMOST FEEL IT!
DRACULA...
DRACULA?
DRACULA!
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
ROGER STERN WRITER
DAN GREEN PENCILER
TERRY AUSTIN INKER
JIM NOVAK LETTERER
BOB SHAREN COLORIST
ALLEN MILGROM, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, ALL-KNOWING

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT!

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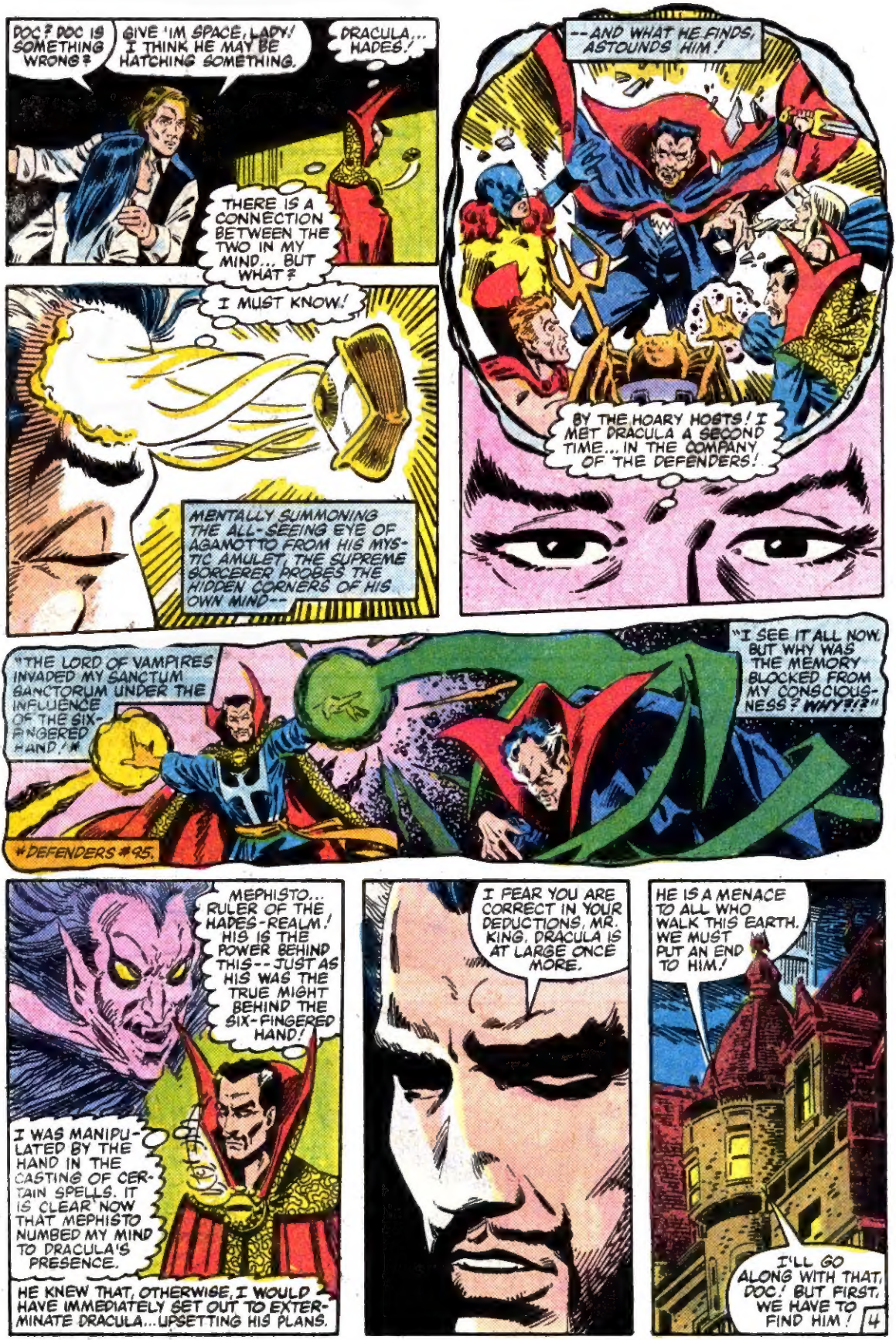
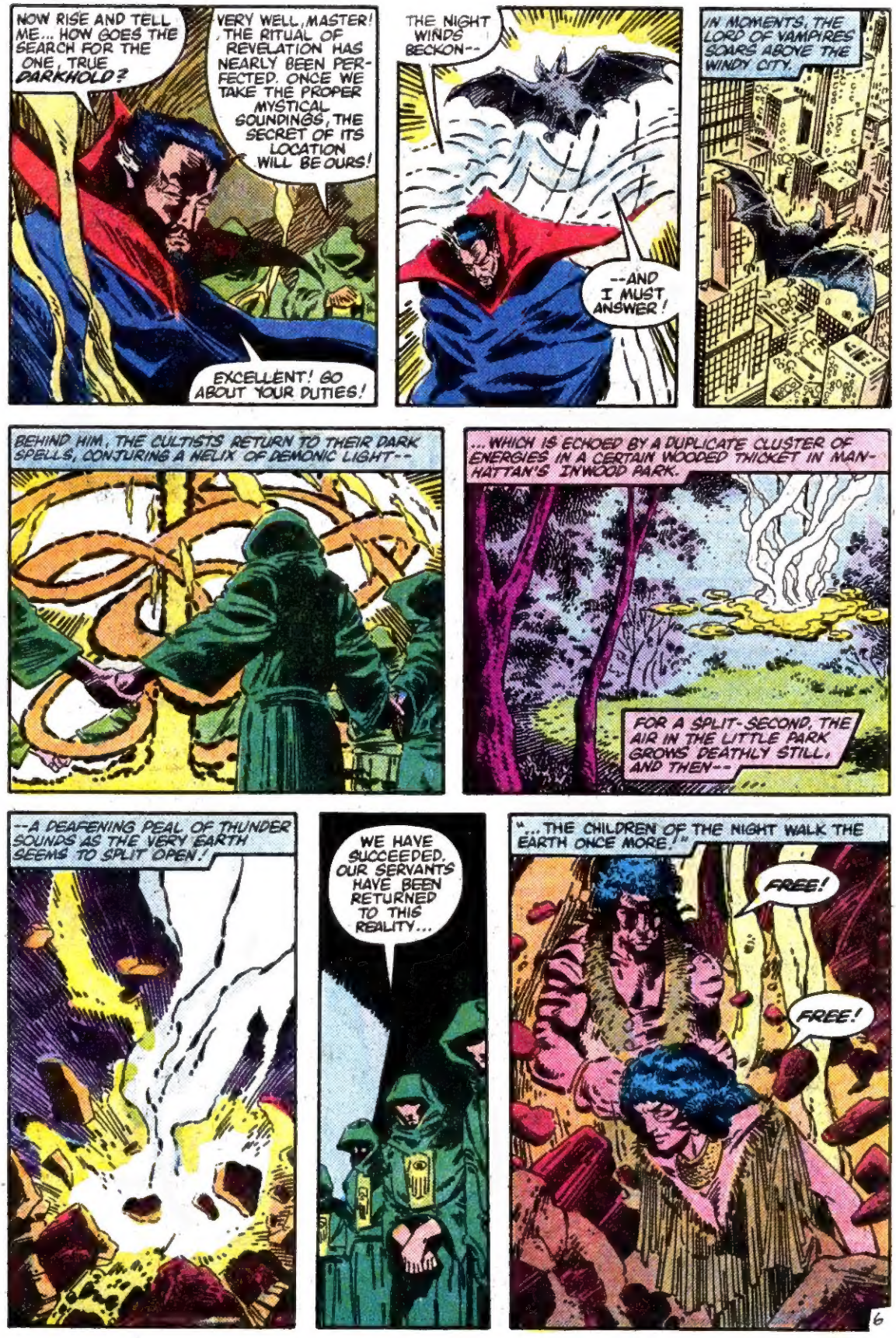
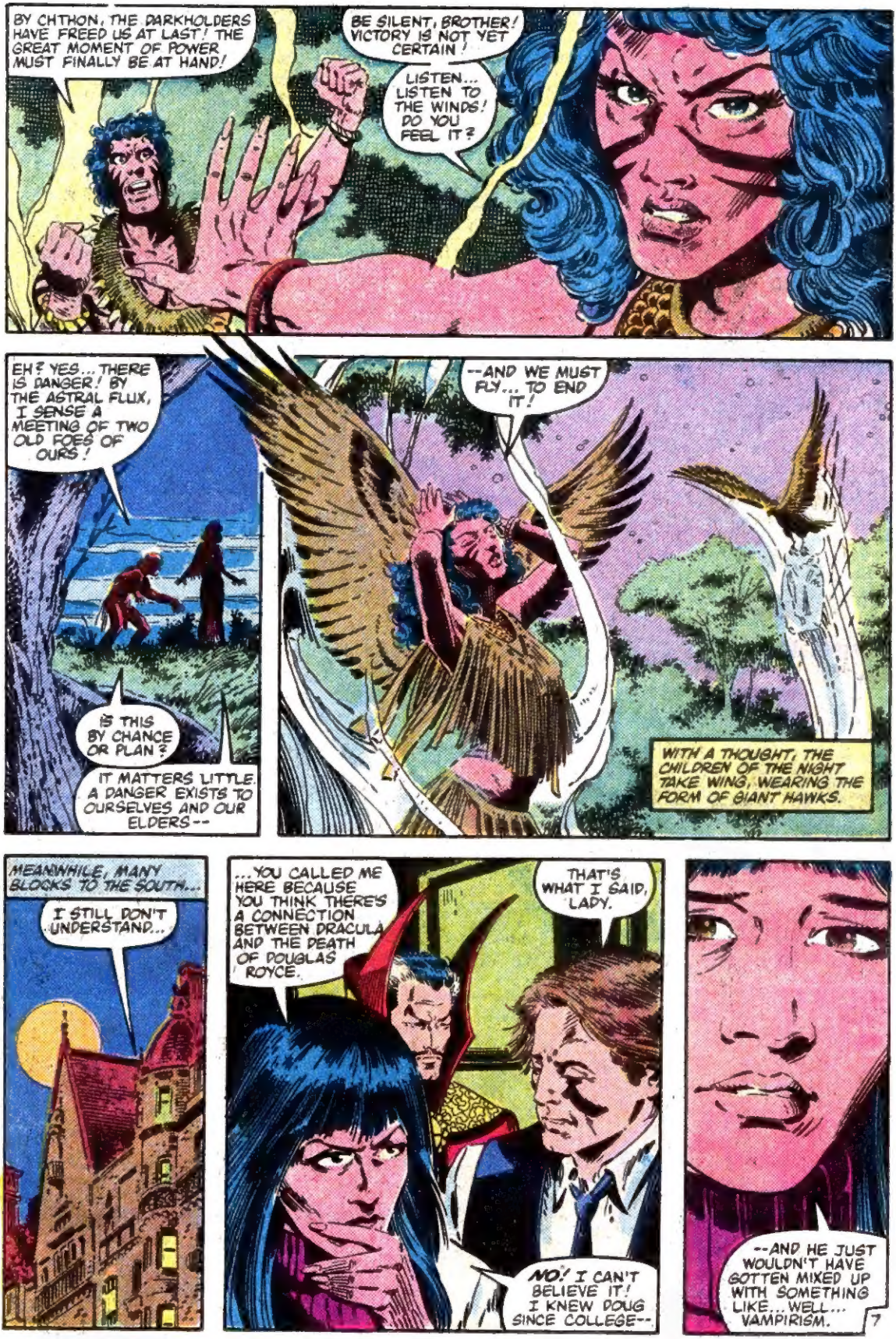
HA HA HA!
DRACULA? OH, COME ON!
I MEAN... YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS...
...CAN YOU?
MR. KING IS VERY SERIOUS, SARA. THERE IS INDEED A CREATURE CALLED DRACULA...
"...AT LEAST, THERE WAS!
"BARELY TWO YEARS AGO, I ENCOUNTERED THAT LOATHSOME BEAST IN THE CITY OF BOSTON.
"THAT MEETING NEARLY COST ME MY SOUL!
"ONLY BY WEAVING THE MOST POWERFUL OF SPELLS WAS I ABLE TO TURN DEFEAT INTO VICTORY--
"--AND FREE BOTH MY FAITHFUL MANSERVANT WONG AND MYSELF FROM THE CURSE OF VAMPIRISM."
"WE LEFT THE LIFELESS CORPSE OF DRACULA BEHIND US."
#IN THE CLASSIC DR. STRANGE #14.
2

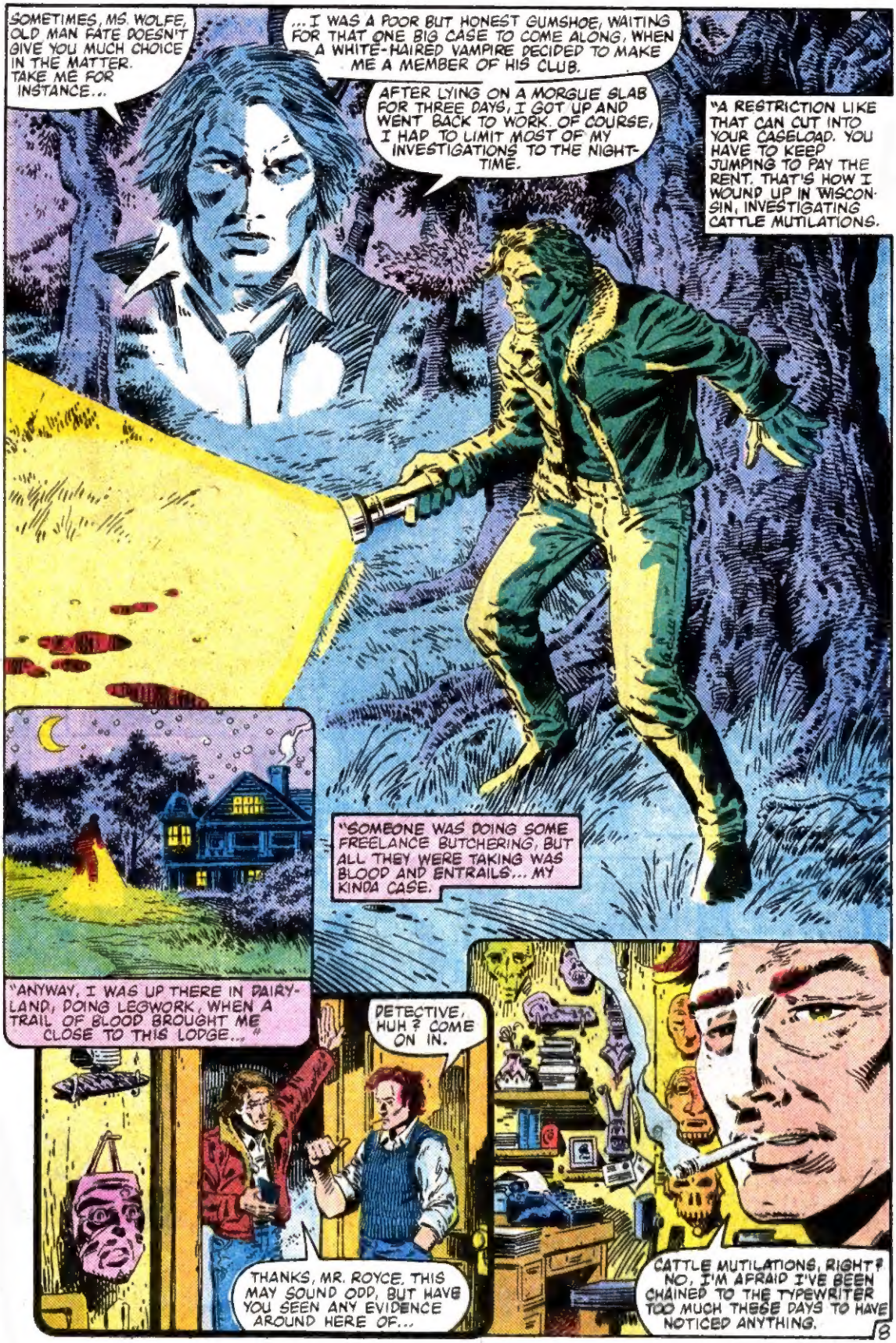
BUT NOW YOU TELL ME THAT DRACULA YET LIVES?!
THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT, DOC. THAT OLD BLOOD-SUCKER HAS MORE LIVES THAN A CAT. I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT HE WAS UP AND AROUND AFTER YOUR BATTLE...
...'CAUSE ABOUT A YEAR LATER, AN OLD GENT NAME OF QUINCY HARKER CORNERED DRAC IN HIS TRANSYLVANIAN CASTLE.
"HE SKEWERED THE VAMPIRE RIGHT PROPER WITH A SILVER SPIKE--
"--AND THEN TRIGGERED AN EXPLOSION WHICH BLEW THEM AND THE CASTLE STRAIGHT TO HADES!*"
HARKER'S FRIENDS FIGURED THAT TO BE THE END OF DRACULA.
ME... I'M NOT SO SURE. I'D HATE TO THINK THAT HARKER DIED IN VAIN, BUT THE DETECTIVE IN ME KEEPS TURNING UP EVIDENCE OF ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE DRACULA'S NAME WRITTEN ALL OVER THEM...
...WEIRD STUFF!
WELL, I'M SURE DOCTOR STRANGE CAN HELP YOU WITH THAT--CAN'T YOU, DOC?
HADES?
*TOMB OF DRACULA #70.
3

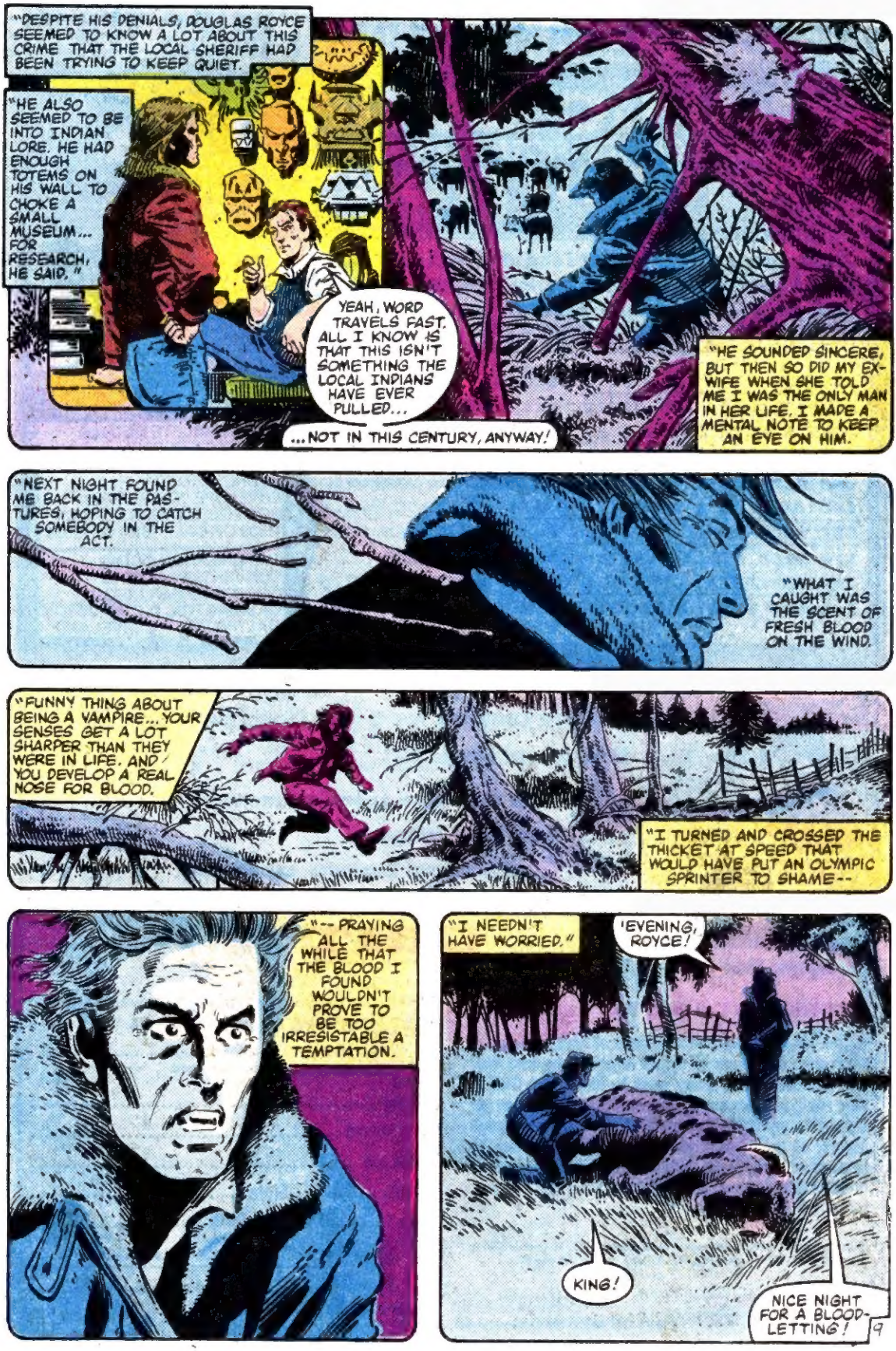

DOC? DOC IS SOMETHING WRONG?
GIVE 'IM SPACE, LADY! I THINK HE MAY BE HATCHING SOMETHING.
DRACULA... HADES!
THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO IN MY MIND... BUT WHAT?
I MUST KNOW!
MENTALLY SUMMONING THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF AGAMOTTO FROM HIS MYSTIC AMULET, THE SUPREME SORCERER PROBES THE HIDDEN CORNERS OF HIS OWN MIND--
--AND WHAT HE FINDS, ASTOUNDS HIM!
BY THE HOARY HOSTS! I MET DRACULA A SECOND TIME... IN THE COMPANY OF THE DEFENDERS!
"THE LORD OF VAMPIRES INVADED MY SANCTUM SANCTORUM UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE SIX-FINGERED HAND!"
"I SEE IT ALL NOW. BUT WHY WAS THE MEMORY BLOCKED FROM MY CONSCIOUSNESS? WHY?!?"
#DEFENDERS #95.
MEPHISTO... RULER OF THE HADES-REALM! HIS IS THE POWER BEHIND THIS--JUST AS HIS WAS THE TRUE MIGHT BEHIND THE SIX-FINGERED HAND!
I WAS MANIPULATED BY THE HAND IN THE CASTING OF CERTAIN SPELLS. IT IS CLEAR NOW THAT MEPHISTO NUMBED MY MIND TO DRACULA'S PRESENCE.
HE KNEW THAT, OTHERWISE, I WOULD HAVE IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO EXTERMINATE DRACULA...UPSETTING HIS PLANS.
I FEAR YOU ARE CORRECT IN YOUR DEDUCTIONS, MR. KING. DRACULA IS AT LARGE ONCE MORE.
HE IS A MENACE TO ALL WHO WALK THIS EARTH. WE MUST PUT AN END TO HIM!
I'LL GO ALONG WITH THAT, DOC! BUT FIRST, WE HAVE TO FIND HIM!
4

CHICAGO...
EMMORETH...DRACULA...VIVOLIBUS...
BEHIND THE DOORS OF AN ORDINARY LOOKING APARTMENT HOUSE, A MOST EXTRAORDINARY CEREMONY IS BEING CONDUCTED AT THIS HOUR.
THE BIZARRE CHANTING ALL BUT DROWNS OUT THE CREAK OF THE HINGED COFFIN LID.
DRACULA DRACULA DRACULA
YES, MY CHILDREN! YOUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED!
DRACULA... YOUR LORD AND MASTER... WALKS AMONG YOU THIS NIGHT!
YOUR FAITH IN THE RITUAL HAS BEEN REWARDED! WITH EACH PASSING NIGHT MY POWER GROWS!
SOON I SHALL TRULY BE IMMORTAL!
AND ON THAT DAY, ALL OF HUMANITY WILL BOW DOWN BEFORE ME!
5

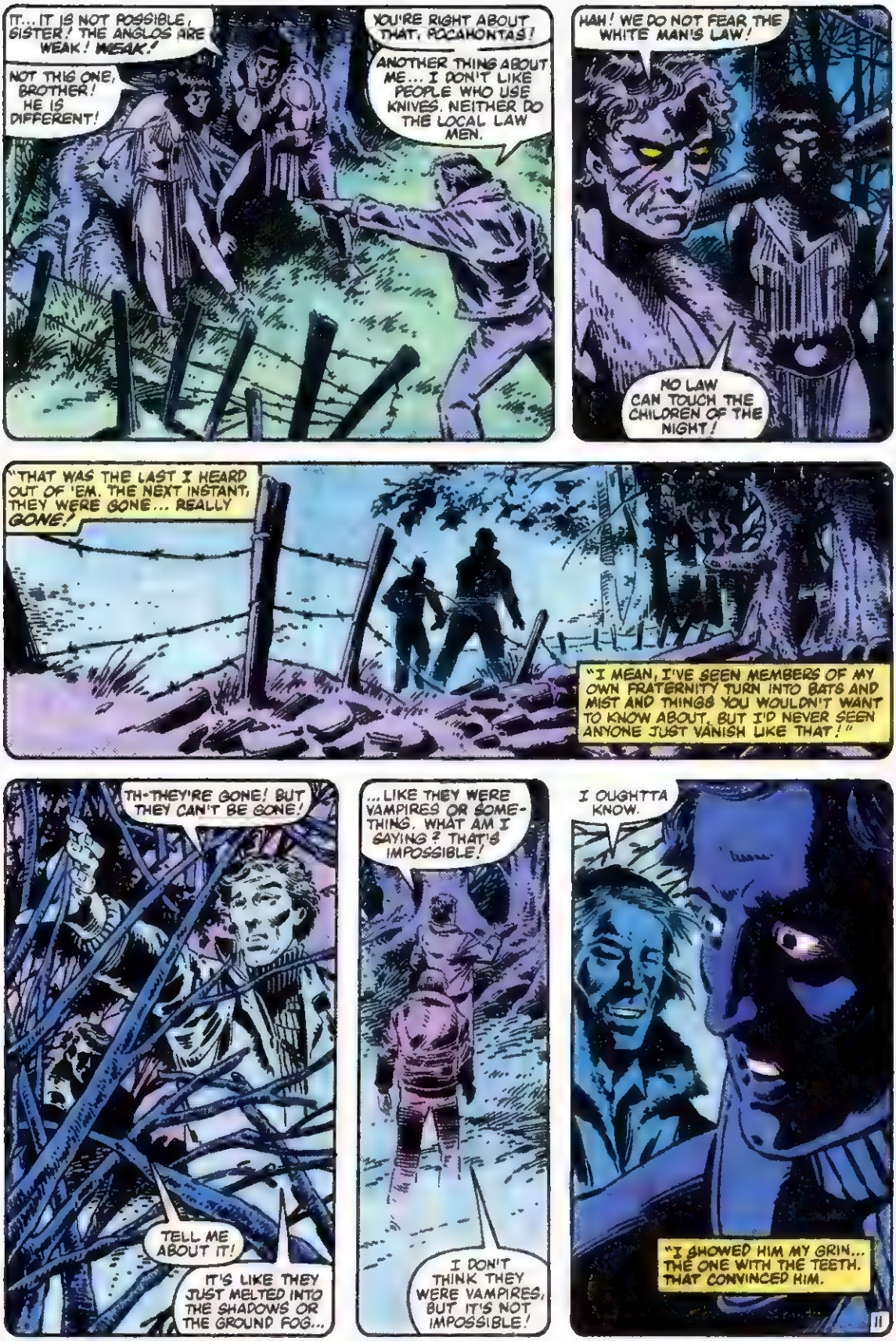

NOW RISE AND TELL ME... HOW GOES THE SEARCH FOR THE ONE TRUE DARKHOLD?
VERY WELL, MASTER! THE RITUAL OF REVELATION HAS NEARLY BEEN PERFECTED. ONCE WE TAKE THE PROPER MYSTICAL SOUNDINGS, THE SECRET OF ITS LOCATION WILL BE OURS!
EXCELLENT! GO ABOUT YOUR DUTIES!
THE NIGHT WINDS BECKON--
--AND I MUST ANSWER!
IN MOMENTS, THE LORD OF VAMPIRES SOARS ABOVE THE WINDY CITY.
BEHIND HIM, THE CULTISTS RETURN TO THEIR DARK SPELLS, CONJURING A HELIX OF DEMONIC LIGHT--
...WHICH IS ECHOED BY A DUPLICATE CLUSTER OF ENERGIES IN A CERTAIN WOODED THICKET IN MANHATTAN'S INWOOD PARK.
FOR A SPLIT-SECOND, THE AIR IN THE LITTLE PARK GROWS DEATHLY STILL. AND THEN---
--A DEAFENING PEAL OF THUNDER SOUNDS AS THE VERY EARTH SEEMS TO SPLIT OPEN!
WE HAVE SUCCEEDED. OUR SERVANTS HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO THIS REALITY...
"...THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT WALK THE EARTH ONCE MORE!"
FREE!
FREE!

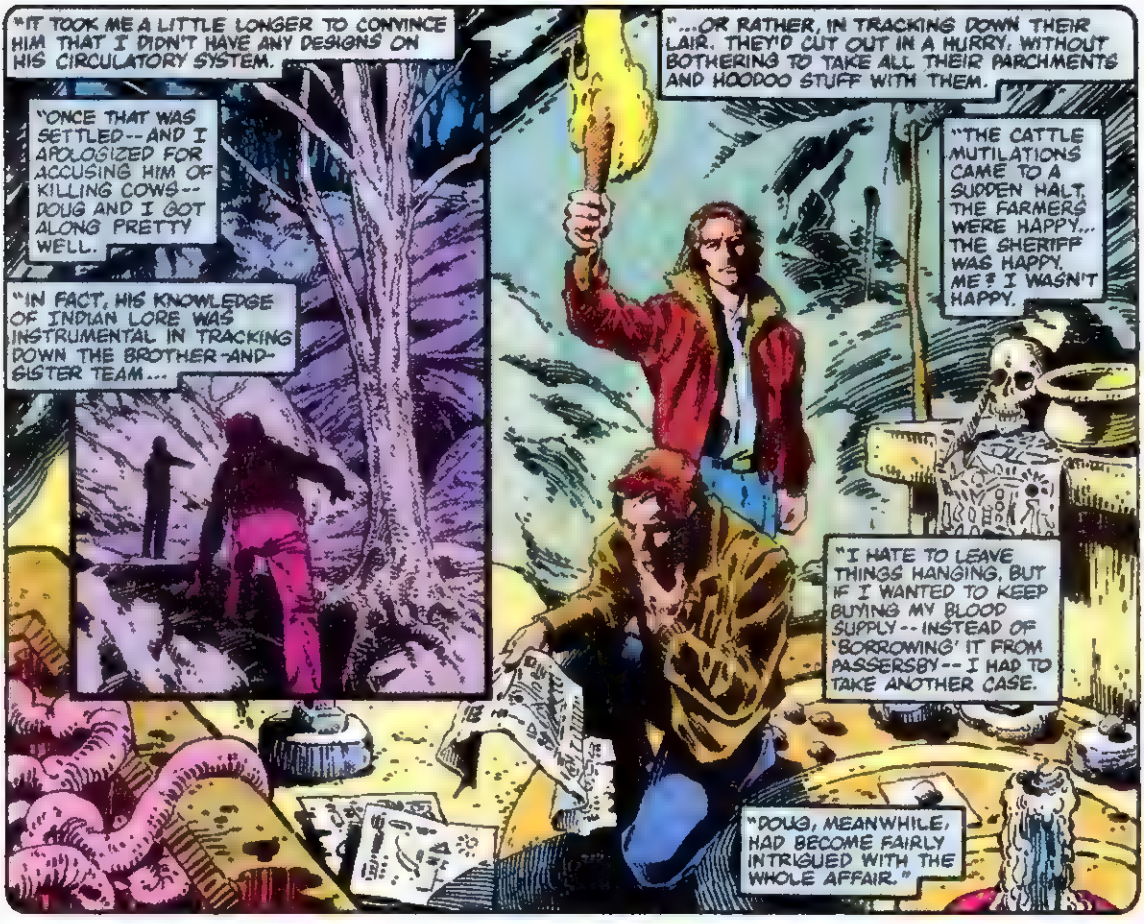

BY CHTHON, THE DARKHOLDERS HAVE FREED US AT LAST! THE GREAT MOMENT OF POWER MUST FINALLY BE AT HAND!
BE SILENT, BROTHER! VICTORY IS NOT YET CERTAIN!
LISTEN... LISTEN TO THE WINDS! DO YOU FEEL IT?
EH? YES... THERE IS DANGER! BY THE ASTRAL FLUX, I SENSE A MEETING OF TWO OLD FOES OF OURS!
IS THIS BY CHANCE OR PLAN?
IT MATTERS LITTLE. A DANGER EXISTS TO OURSELVES AND OUR ELDERS--
--AND WE MUST FLY... TO END IT!
WITH A THOUGHT, THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT TAKE WING, WEARING THE FORM OF GIANT HAWKS.
MEANWHILE, MANY BLOCKS TO THE SOUTH...
I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND...
...YOU CALLED ME HERE BECAUSE YOU THINK THERE'S A CONNECTION BETWEEN DRACULA AND THE DEATH OF DOUGLAS ROYCE.
THAT'S WHAT I SAID, LADY.
NO! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I KNEW DOUG SINCE COLLEGE--
--AND HE JUST WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN MIXED UP WITH SOMETHING LIKE... WELL... VAMPIRISM.


SOMETIMES, MS. WOLFE, OLD MAN FATE DOESN'T GIVE YOU MUCH CHOICE IN THE MATTER. TAKE ME FOR INSTANCE...
...I WAS A POOR BUT HONEST GUMSHOE, WAITING FOR THAT ONE BIG CASE TO COME ALONG, WHEN A WHITE-HAIRED VAMPIRE DECIDED TO MAKE ME A MEMBER OF HIS CLUB.
AFTER LYING ON A MORGUE SLAB FOR THREE DAYS, I GOT UP AND WENT BACK TO WORK. OF COURSE, I HAD TO LIMIT MOST OF MY INVESTIGATIONS TO THE NIGHT-TIME.
"A RESTRICTION LIKE THAT CAN CUT INTO YOUR CASELOAD. YOU HAVE TO KEEP JUMPING TO PAY THE RENT. THAT'S HOW I WOUND UP IN WISCONSIN, INVESTIGATING CATTLE MUTILATIONS.
"SOMEONE WAS DOING SOME FREELANCE BUTCHERING, BUT ALL THEY WERE TAKING WAS BLOOD AND ENTRAILS... MY KINDA CASE.
"ANYWAY, I WAS UP THERE IN DAIRY-LAND, DOING LEGWORK, WHEN A TRAIL OF BLOOD BROUGHT ME CLOSE TO THIS LODGE..."
DETECTIVE, HUH? COME ON IN.
THANKS, MR. ROYCE. THIS MAY SOUND ODD, BUT HAVE YOU SEEN ANY EVIDENCE AROUND HERE OF...
CATTLE MUTILATIONS, RIGHT? NO, I'M AFRAID I'VE BEEN CHAINED TO THE TYPEWRITER TOO MUCH THESE DAYS TO HAVE NOTICED ANYTHING.


"DESPITE HIS DENIALS, DOUGLAS ROYCE SEEMED TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT THIS CRIME THAT THE LOCAL SHERIFF HAD BEEN TRYING TO KEEP QUIET.
"HE ALSO SEEMED TO BE INTO INDIAN LORE. HE HAD ENOUGH TOTEMS ON HIS WALL TO CHOKE A SMALL MUSEUM... FOR RESEARCH, HE SAID."
YEAH, WORD TRAVELS FAST. ALL I KNOW IS THAT THIS ISN'T SOMETHING THE LOCAL INDIANS HAVE EVER PULLED...
...NOT IN THIS CENTURY, ANYWAY!
"HE SOUNDED SINCERE, BUT THEN SO DID MY EX-WIFE WHEN SHE TOLD ME I WAS THE ONLY MAN IN HER LIFE. I MADE A MENTAL NOTE TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.
"NEXT NIGHT FOUND ME BACK IN THE PASTURES, HOPING TO CATCH SOMEBODY IN THE ACT.
"WHAT I CAUGHT WAS THE SCENT OF FRESH BLOOD ON THE WIND.
"FUNNY THING ABOUT BEING A VAMPIRE... YOUR SENSES GET A LOT SHARPER THAN THEY WERE IN LIFE. AND YOU DEVELOP A REAL NOSE FOR BLOOD.
"I TURNED AND CROSSED THE THICKET AT SPEED THAT WOULD HAVE PUT AN OLYMPIC SPRINTER TO SHAME--
"-- PRAYING ALL THE WHILE THAT THE BLOOD I FOUND WOULDN'T PROVE TO BE TOO IRRESISTABLE A TEMPTATION.
"I NEEDN'T HAVE WORRIED."
'EVENING, ROYCE!
KING!
NICE NIGHT FOR A BLOOD-LETTING!

WHAT DO YOU--? HEY, YOU DON'T THINK--?
GIVE IT A REST, ROYCE! YOU'RE STANDING OVER A DEAD CHUNK OF BEEF WITH BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO THINK?
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK... I DIDN'T DO THIS!
I JUST FOUND THIS CARCASS, AND IT'S STILL WARM! WHILE YOU'RE STANDING THERE WASTING OUR TIME, THE REAL SICKOS ARE PROBABLY GETTING AWAY!
"ROYCE WAS ONLY HALF RIGHT.
"THE REAL SICKOS WEREN'T GETTING AWAY. THEY WERE LYING IN WAIT!
"THE FRESH CARCASS HAD BEEN LEFT AS BAIT...
"...AND IT LOOKED LIKE OUR PLAY-MATES WERE EAGER TO GRADUATE TO HUMAN SACRIFICES.
"THEIR MISTAKE WAS IN TAKING ME FOR HUMAN.
"I SHOWED ONE THE ERROR OF HER WAYS--
"--AND ROYCE FOLLOWED MY LEAD."
BROTHER! THIS ONE'S STRENGTH IS TOO GREAT! WE ARE UNDONE!
10


IT... IT IS NOT POSSIBLE, SISTER! THE ANGLOS ARE WEAK! WEAK!
NOT THIS ONE, BROTHER! HE IS DIFFERENT!
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT, POCAHONTAS!
ANOTHER THING ABOUT ME... I DON'T LIKE PEOPLE WHO USE KNIVES. NEITHER DO THE LOCAL LAW MEN.
HAH! WE DO NOT FEAR THE WHITE MAN'S LAW!
NO LAW CAN TOUCH THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT!
"THAT WAS THE LAST I HEARD OUT OF 'EM. THE NEXT INSTANT, THEY WERE GONE... REALLY GONE!
"I MEAN, I'VE SEEN MEMBERS OF MY OWN FRATERNITY TURN INTO BATS AND MIST AND THINGS YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT, BUT I'D NEVER SEEN ANYONE JUST VANISH LIKE THAT!"
TH-THEY'RE GONE! BUT THEY CAN'T BE GONE!
TELL ME ABOUT IT!
IT'S LIKE THEY JUST MELTED INTO THE SHADOWS OR THE GROUND FOG...
...LIKE THEY WERE VAMPIRES OR SOMETHING. WHAT AM I SAYING? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
I DON'T THINK THEY WERE VAMPIRES, BUT IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE!
I OUGHTTA KNOW.
"I SHOWED HIM MY GRIN... THE ONE WITH THE TEETH. THAT CONVINCED HIM.

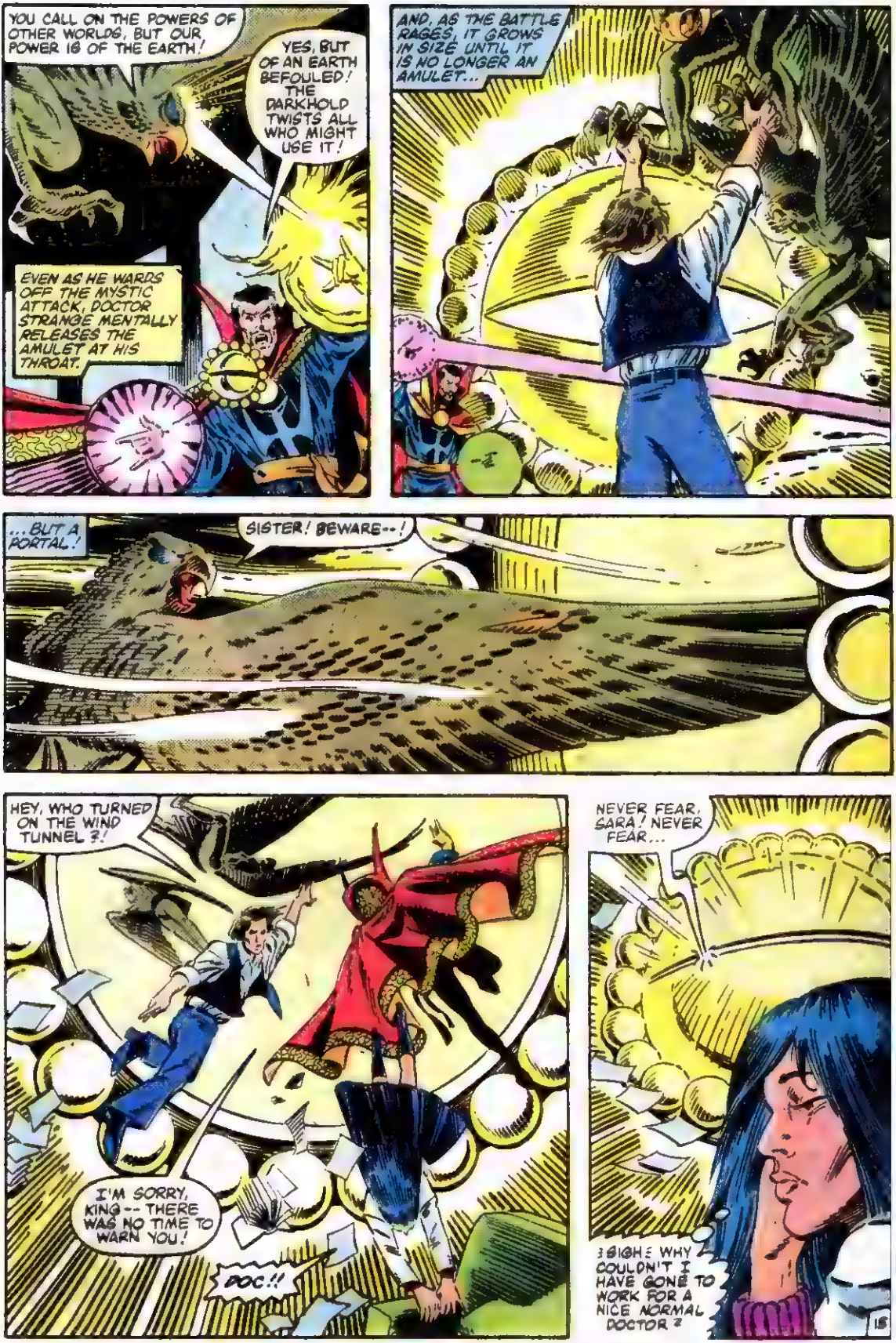

"IT TOOK ME A LITTLE LONGER TO CONVINCE HIM THAT I DIDN'T HAVE ANY DESIGNS ON HIS CIRCULATORY SYSTEM.
"ONCE THAT WAS SETTLED--AND I APOLOGIZED FOR ACCUSING HIM OF KILLING COWS--DOUG AND I GOT ALONG PRETTY WELL.
"IN FACT, HIS KNOWLEDGE OF INDIAN LORE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN TRACKING DOWN THE BROTHER-AND-SISTER TEAM...
"...OR RATHER, IN TRACKING DOWN THEIR LAIR. THEY'D CUT OUT IN A HURRY, WITHOUT BOTHERING TO TAKE ALL THEIR PARCHMENTS AND HOODOO STUFF WITH THEM.
"THE CATTLE MUTILATIONS CAME TO A SUDDEN HALT. THE FARMERS WERE HAPPY... THE SHERIFF WAS HAPPY. ME? I WASN'T HAPPY.
"I HATE TO LEAVE THINGS HANGING, BUT IF I WANTED TO KEEP BUYING MY BLOOD SUPPLY--INSTEAD OF 'BORROWING' IT FROM PASSERSBY--I HAD TO TAKE ANOTHER CASE.
"DOUG, MEANWHILE, HAD BECOME FAIRLY INTRIGUED WITH THE WHOLE AFFAIR."

HE TOLD ME HE WAS SURE THAT OUR "CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT" HAD ORIGINALLY COME FROM SOME INDIAN RESERVATION TO THE NORTH. I TOLD HIM TO KEEP HIS EARS OPEN, BUT TO BE CAREFUL.
WE KEPT IN TOUCH. WHILE I WAS IN ENGLAND ON A CASE, I RECEIVED AN URGENT CABLE FROM DOUG, SAYING HE WAS ONTO SOMETHING. BEFORE I COULD GET BACK, HE WAS DEAD.
DOUG WAS IN A VERY NERVOUS STATE WHEN HE CAME BACK TO THE CITY, MR. KING... ABOUT WHAT, HE WOULDN'T SAY.
HE WAS A REGULAR STRAIGHT-SHOOTER, MS. WOLFE. A FELLA LIKE ME DOESN'T MAKE MANY FRIENDS. BUT WE...

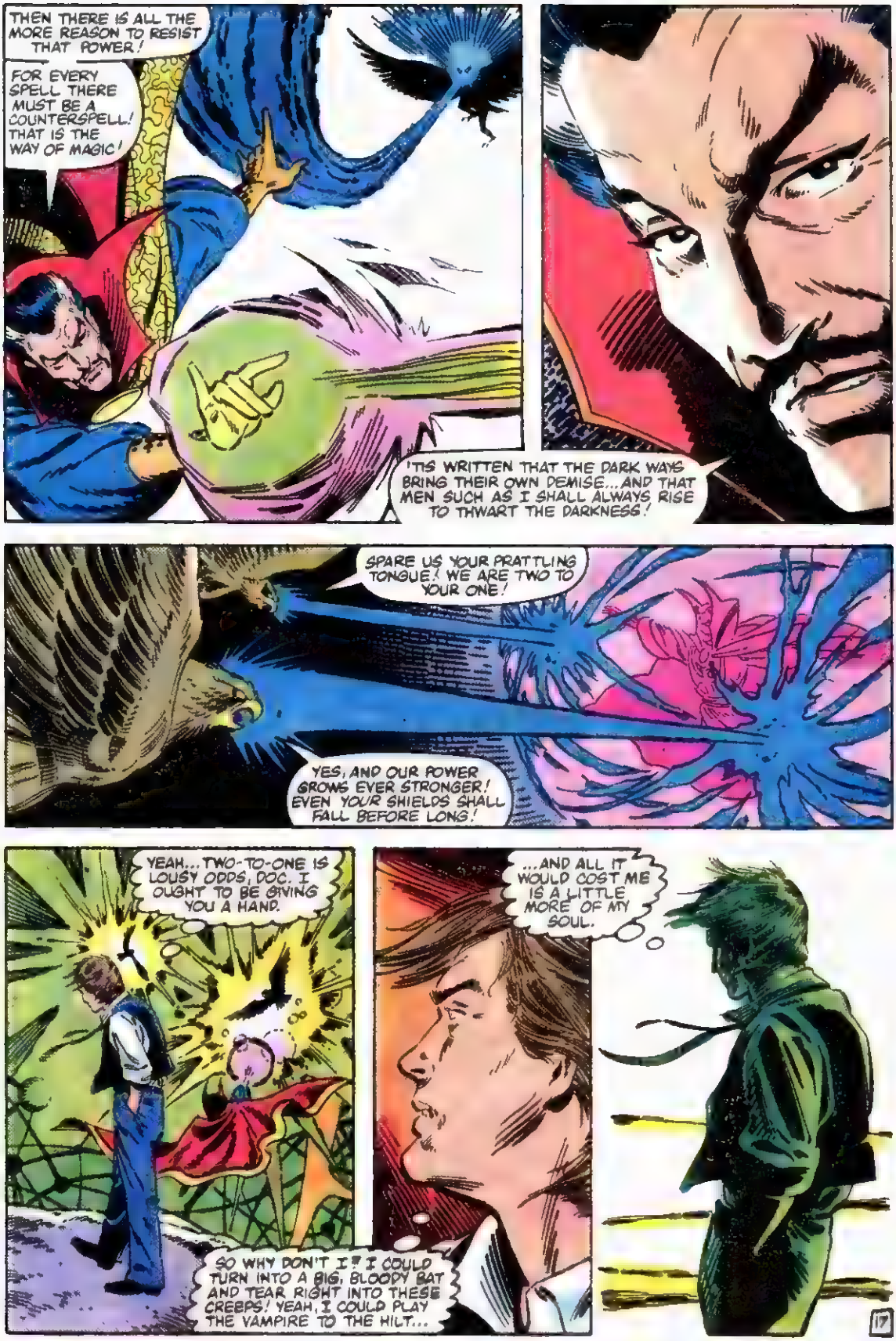
...WE GOT PRETTY CLOSE.
I BELIEVE YOU, KING. I ALSO BELIEVE YOU DESERVE TO KNOW HOW HE DIED.
DOUGLAS ROYCE WAS MURDERED BY SORCEROUS MEANS... REDUCED TO ASHES ON A GREENWICH VILLAGE STREET. BUT HIS DEATH WAS AVENGED, AFTER A FASHION.

"IN TRACING THE PSYCHIC ENERGIES LEFT BY ROYCE'S KILLERS, I ENCOUNTERED A YOUNG COUPLE WHO MATCHED YOUR DESCRIPTION OF THESE 'CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT.'
"THEIR POWERS, HOWEVER, MUST HAVE GROWN CONSIDERABLY SINCE YOU BATTLED THEM. THEY MANIPULATED AWESOME MYSTIC POWER... THEY COULD CHANGE THEIR BODILY FORM.
"STILL, I WAS ABLE TO SEAL THEM AWAY FROM THE WORLD OF MAN."
IS THAT SO? I KNEW THERE MUST'VE BEEN MORE TO DOUG'S DEATH THAN WHAT APPEARED ON THE POLICE BLOTTERS. THIS IS DEFINITELY GETTING SERIOUS.
INDEED. HOWEVER, I DO ADMIT TO SOME CONFUSION IN THIS WHOLE AFFAIR, KING. JUST WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ROYCE'S DEATH AND THE RETURN OF DRACULA?
I WAS COMING TO THAT. YOU SEE, I WAS OVER IN ENGLAND INVESTIGATING THE DEATH OF A LADY NAMED RACHEL VAN HELSING. SHE WAS KILLED BY DRACULA.
BUT HERE'S WHERE IT GETS WEIRD. THE FEW SCATTERED WITNESSES DESCRIBED A DRACULA WHO WAS YOUNGER IN APPEARANCE... BEARDED.
BUT THE HAIR OF A VAMPIRE DOESN'T GROW! I HAVEN'T SHAVED IN YEARS!
NEXT, I CAUGHT WIND OF A STORY THAT DRACULA HAD SOME OF HIS MINIONS OUT TRYING TO TRACK DOWN SOME MAGIC BOOK... CALLED THE DARKHOLD!
THE NEXT DAY, DOUG'S CABLE ARRIVED... HE'D GOTTEN A LEAD ON OUR PLAYMATES. IT ENDED WITH A WARNING... "BEWARE OF THE DARKHOLDERS!"
13

CRASH
YOU SHOULD HAVE HEEDED THAT WARNING, FOOL!
ALL WHO WOULD OPPOSE THE POWER OF THE DARKHOLD MUST DIE!
OMIGOD.
NOT SO FAST, BIRD-LEGS!
THE LADY IS A FRIEND OF A FRIEND! IF YOU WANT TO HURT HER--
--YOU'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME FIRST!
KEEP THEM AT BAY, KING! IF THESE CREATURES TRULY DRAW THEIR POWER FROM THE DARKHOLD--!
WE DO INDEED, SORCERER! AND 'TIS A GREATER POWER THAN YOU SHALL EVER TAP!
14


YOU CALL ON THE POWERS OF OTHER WORLDS, BUT OUR POWER IS OF THE EARTH!
YES, BUT OF AN EARTH BEFOULED! THE DARKHOLD TWISTS ALL WHO MIGHT USE IT!
EVEN AS HE WARDS OFF THE MYSTIC ATTACK, DOCTOR STRANGE MENTALLY RELEASES THE AMULET AT HIS THROAT.
AND, AS THE BATTLE RAGES, IT GROWS IN SIZE UNTIL IT IS NO LONGER AN AMULET...
...BUT A PORTAL!
SISTER! BEWARE--!
HEY, WHO TURNED ON THE WIND TUNNEL?!
I'M SORRY, KING-- THERE WAS NO TIME TO WARN YOU!
DOC!!
NEVER FEAR, SARA! NEVER FEAR...
SIGH! WHY COULDN'T I HAVE GONE TO WORK FOR A NICE NORMAL DOCTOR?
15

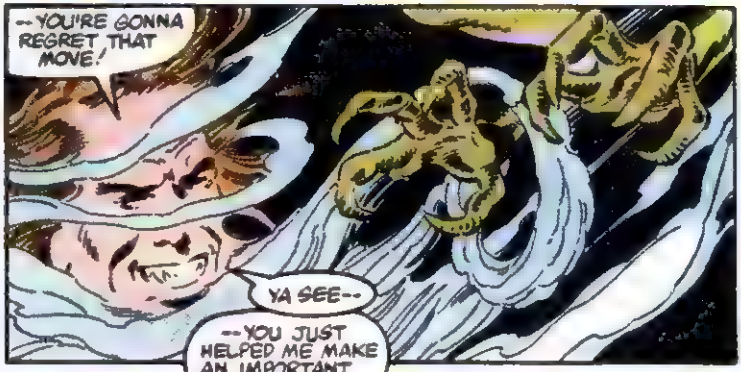
DOC! WHERE THE BLAZES ARE WE?
ANOTHER DIMENSION, MR. KING... ANOTHER REALITY. IN THIS REALM, THERE WILL BE NO INNOCENTS TO BE HARMED BY OUR BATTLE!
PLUS, HERE OUR FOES ARE OUT OF THEIR ELEMENT... DISORIENTED.
YEAH, WELL THEY'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES. WHICH WAY IS UP?
THAT WORD HAS NO MEANING HERE.
YOU SHOULD BE SAFE ENOUGH IF YOU STAY UPON THAT ROCKY ISLET
STAY--? HEY, YOU CAN'T FIGHT THESE CHARACTERS BY YOURSELF!
YOUR NEW-FOUND ALLY SPEAKS TRUE, SORCERER. THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT KEEP THEIR POWER WHEREVER THEY GO!
THE DARKHOLD'S MIGHT PERMEATES ALL REALITIES!


THEN THERE IS ALL THE MORE REASON TO RESIST THAT POWER!
FOR EVERY SPELL THERE MUST BE A COUNTERSPELL! THAT IS THE WAY OF MAGIC!
'TIS WRITTEN THAT THE DARK WAYS BRING THEIR OWN DEMISE...AND THAT MEN SUCH AS I SHALL ALWAYS RISE TO THWART THE DARKNESS!
SPARE US YOUR PRATTLING TONGUE! WE ARE TWO TO YOUR ONE!
YES, AND OUR POWER GROWS EVER STRONGER! EVEN YOUR SHIELDS SHALL FALL BEFORE LONG!
YEAH... TWO-TO-ONE IS LOUSY ODDS, DOC. I OUGHT TO BE GIVING YOU A HAND.
SO WHY DON'T I? I COULD TURN INTO A BIG, BLOODY BAT AND TEAR RIGHT INTO THESE CREEPS! YEAH, I COULD PLAY THE VAMPIRE TO THE HILT...
...AND ALL IT WOULD COST ME IS A LITTLE MORE OF MY SOUL.
17

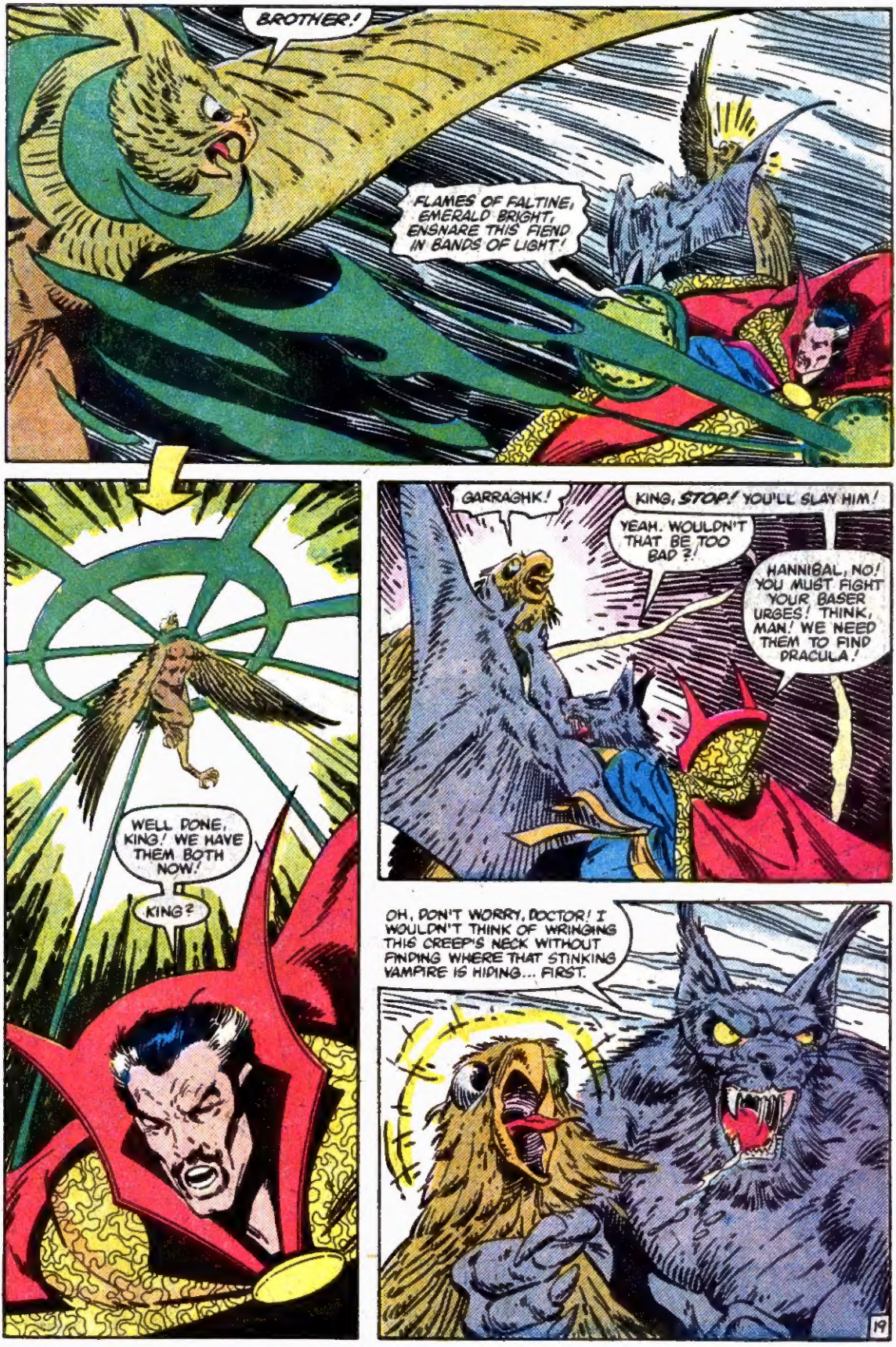
AND, WHILE THE VAMPIRE DETECTIVE STRUGGLES WITH HIS CONSCIENCE...
OMNIPOTENT OSHTUR BEDEVIL MY FOES WITH BOLTS OF YOUR POWER THAT SWIRL AND ENCLOSE!

FOR ALL OUR NEW MIGHT, HE IS STILL A DANGEROUS ENEMY!
BUT THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY TO STRIKE HIM!

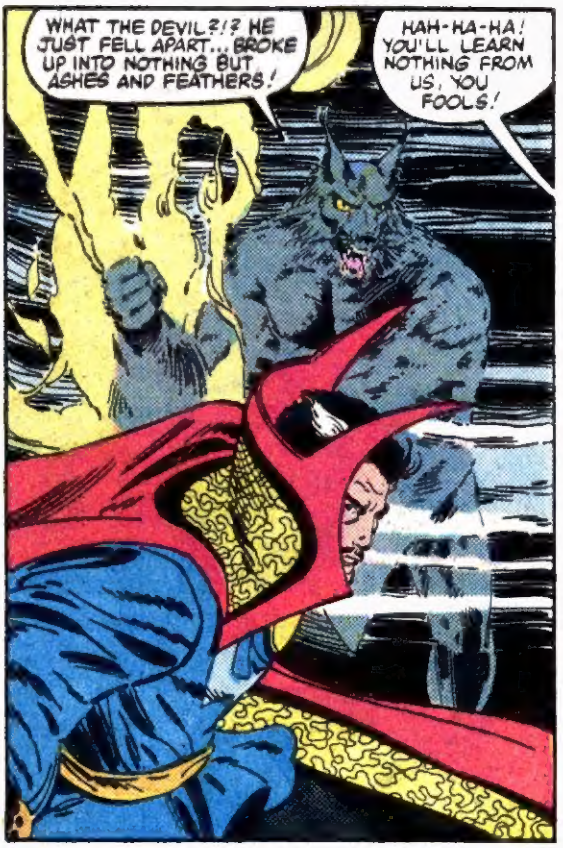
WHILE MY SISTER DRAWS THE BRUNT OF HIS ATTACK, I SHALL GATHER A HOSTAGE!
YOU ARE MINE, MORTAL!
YA KNOW, SPORT--

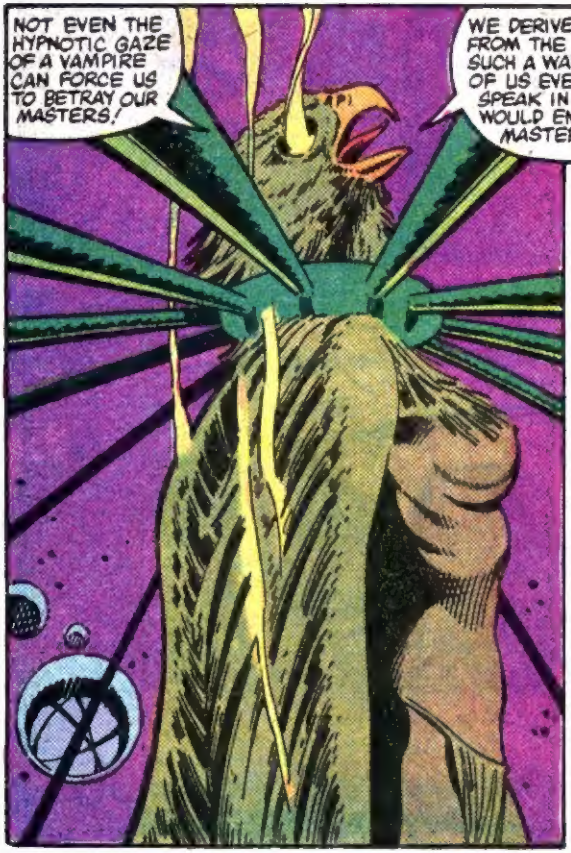

--YOU'RE GONNA REGRET THAT MOVE!
YA SEE--
--YOU JUST HELPED ME MAKE AN IMPORTANT DECISION!

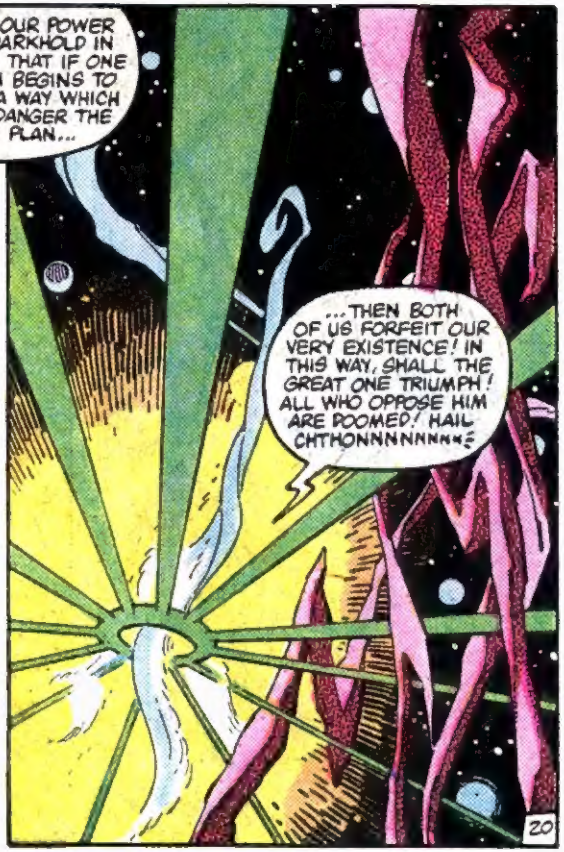
KRAALIGH!

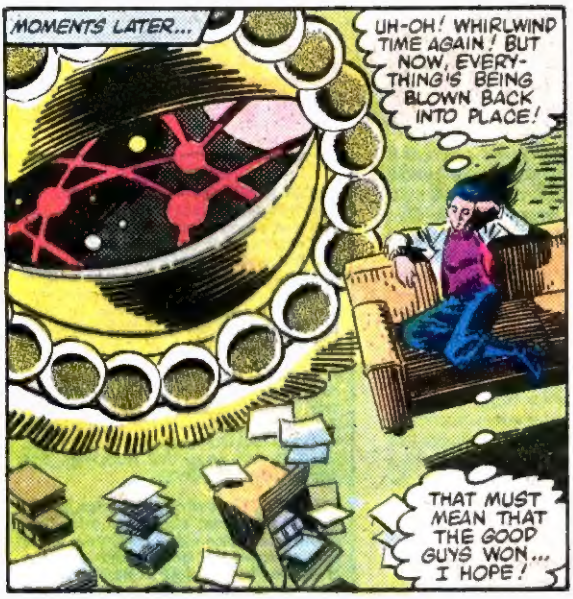

BROTHER!
FLAMES OF FALTINE, EMERALD BRIGHT, ENSNARE THIS FIEND IN BANDS OF LIGHT!
WELL DONE, KING! WE HAVE THEM BOTH NOW!
KING?
GARRAGHK!
KING, STOP! YOU'LL SLAY HIM!
YEAH. WOULDN'T THAT BE TOO BAD?!
HANNIBAL, NO! YOU MUST FIGHT YOUR BASER URGES! THINK, MAN! WE NEED THEM TO FIND DRACULA!
OH, DON'T WORRY, DOCTOR! I WOULDN'T THINK OF WRINGING THIS CREEP'S NECK WITHOUT FINDING WHERE THAT STINKING VAMPIRE IS HIDING... FIRST.
19

LOOK ME IN THE EYES, YOU! YOU CAN'T RESIST ME! I WANT ANSWERS! WHO ARE YOUR BOSSES? WHAT'S YOUR CONNECTION WITH DRACULA? WHERE IS HE? TALK!
D-D-DARKHOLDERS HAAA...


WHAT THE DEVIL?!? HE JUST FELL APART... BROKE UP INTO NOTHING BUT ASHES AND FEATHERS!
HAH-HA-HA! YOU'LL LEARN NOTHING FROM US, YOU FOOLS!


NOT EVEN THE HYPNOTIC GAZE OF A VAMPIRE CAN FORCE US TO BETRAY OUR MASTERS!
WE DERIVE OUR POWER FROM THE DARKHOLD IN SUCH A WAY THAT IF ONE OF US EVEN BEGINS TO SPEAK IN A WAY WHICH WOULD ENDANGER THE MASTER PLAN...


...THEN BOTH OF US FORFEIT OUR VERY EXISTENCE! IN THIS WAY, SHALL THE GREAT ONE TRIUMPH! ALL WHO OPPOSE HIM ARE DOOMED! HAIL CHTHONNNNNNNNS!

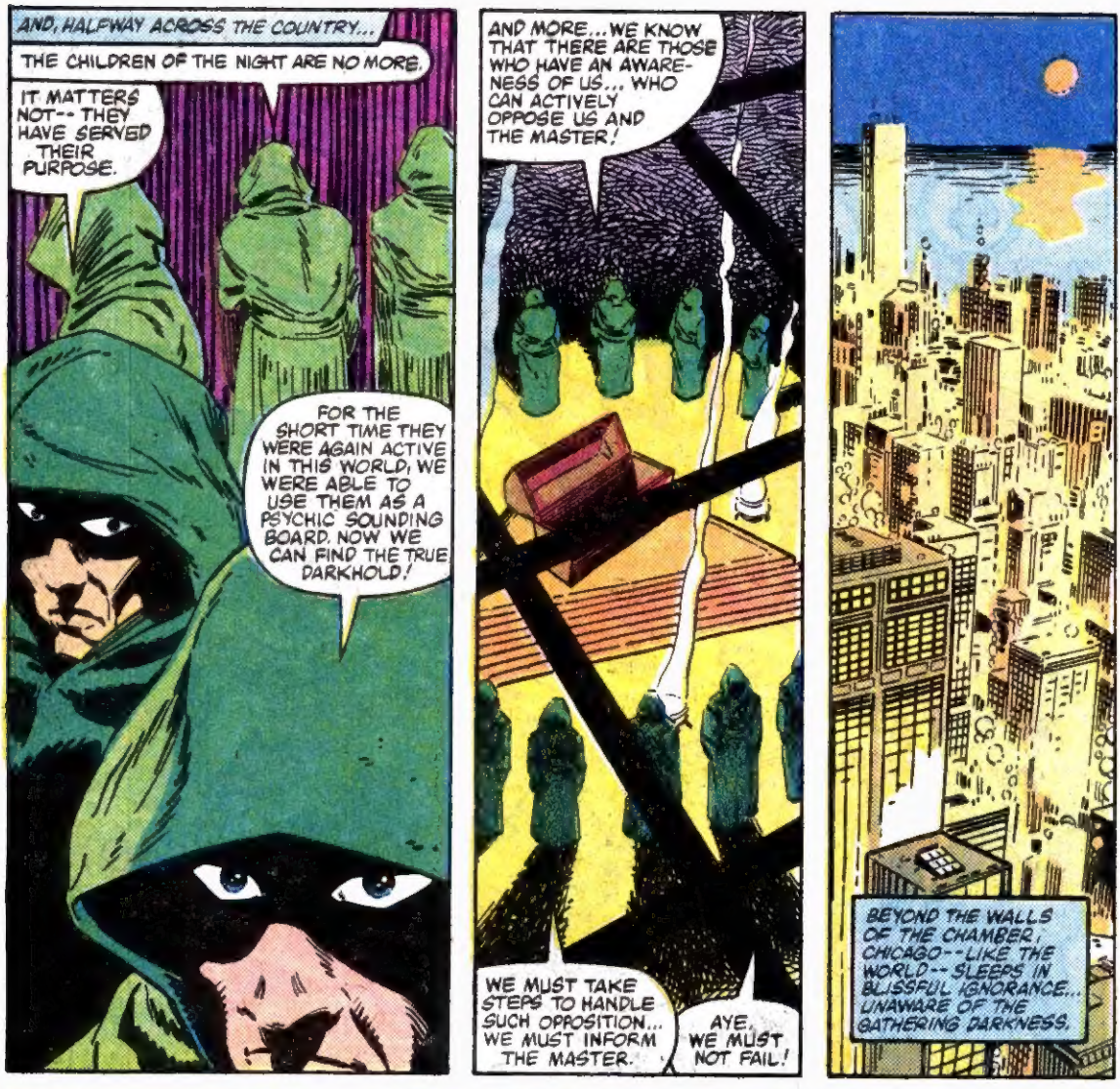

MOMENTS LATER...
UH-OH! WHIRLWIND TIME AGAIN! BUT NOW, EVERYTHING'S BEING BLOWN BACK INTO PLACE!
THAT MUST MEAN THAT THE GOOD GUYS WON... I HOPE!

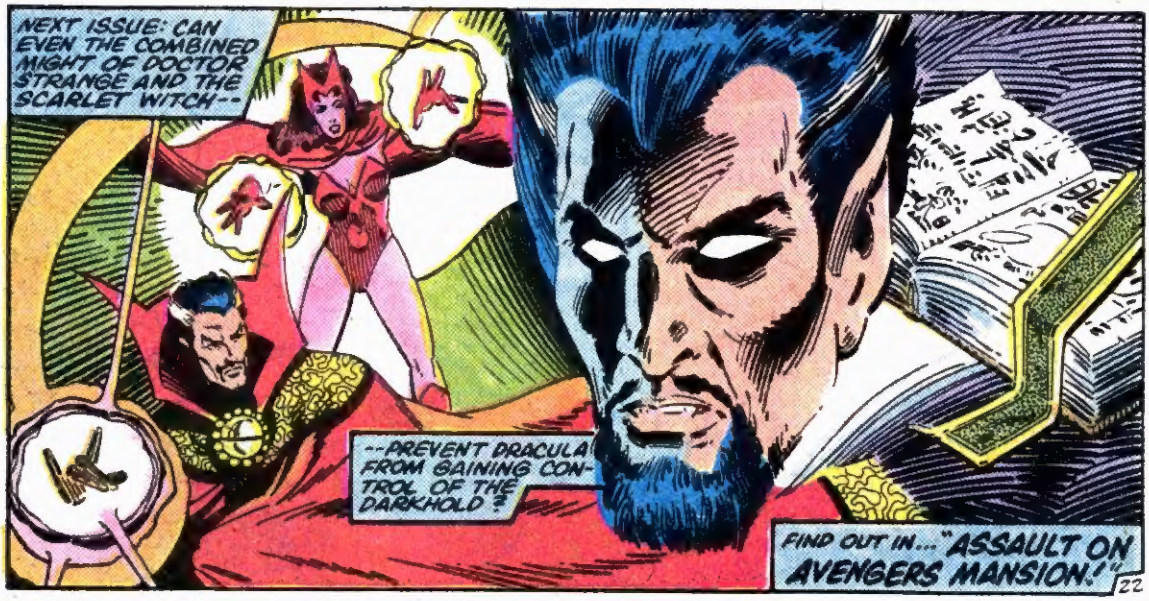
WELCOME BACK, DOC! HOW DID--?
WHAT'S THAT THING WITH YOU?!?

NO NEED TO BE ALARMED, SARA... ALTHOUGH YOU MIGHT WISH TO AVERT YOUR EYES MOMENTARILY!
DO WHAT HE SAYS, LADY! I'M STILL NEW AT THIS SHAPE-CHANGING STUFF!

DECENT FOLKS SHOULDN'T HAVE TO WATCH ME DO IT!

YOU MUSTN'T BELITTLE YOURSELF SO, HANNIBAL. YOUR POWERS MAY BE CALLED ON MANY TIMES IN THE STRUGGLE YET TO COME!
"YET TO COME?" THERE'S MORE?
COME! WE MUST RETURN TO MY SANCTUM SANCTORUM TO PLAN OUR NEXT MOVE.
YEAH... SURE, BE... RIGHT WITH YOU.


AND, HALFWAY ACROSS THE COUNTRY...
THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT ARE NO MORE.
IT MATTERS NOT-- THEY HAVE SERVED THEIR PURPOSE.
FOR THE SHORT TIME THEY WERE AGAIN ACTIVE IN THIS WORLD, WE WERE ABLE TO USE THEM AS A PSYCHIC SOUNDING BOARD. NOW WE CAN FIND THE TRUE DARKHOLD!
AND MORE... WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE AN AWARENESS OF US... WHO CAN ACTIVELY OPPOSE US AND THE MASTER!
WE MUST TAKE STEPS TO HANDLE SUCH OPPOSITION... WE MUST INFORM THE MASTER.
AYE, WE MUST NOT FAIL!
BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CHAMBER, CHICAGO--LIKE THE WORLD--SLEEPS IN BLISSFUL IGNORANCE... UNAWARE OF THE GATHERING DARKNESS.


NEXT ISSUE: CAN EVEN THE COMBINED MIGHT OF DOCTOR STRANGE AND THE SCARLET WITCH--
--PREVENT DRACULA FROM GAINING CONTROL OF THE DARKHOLD?
FIND OUT IN... "ASSAULT ON AVENGERS MANSION!"